

Delaware



DELAWARE HAS PROPOSED A STRATEGY FOR organizing all its early care and education efforts statewide, building up to the goal of great outcomes for all children. Delaware has two priorities:

1. To accelerate the pace of progress toward its objectives and goals.
2. To take areas of good work in Delaware and make them great. By the end of the grant program, the state will have a unified system of early childhood services that is coordinated across early learning and development programs and prioritizes resources for children, families, and programs with high needs.

The plan calls for an ambitious and rapid buildup of both participation and quality in Delaware's tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS), known as Stars. Delaware seeks to increase the percentage of children with high needs participating in a Stars-rated program, increase the percentage of Stars-rated programs that reach the top tiers of quality, and increase the percentage of children with high needs enrolled in a top-tier program.

Delaware's application focuses on four key areas of activity:

- Addressing the health and development needs of the whole child
- Building a professional and effective early childhood workforce
- Strengthening Stars to drive high-quality programming
- Aligning birth-to-8 approaches to school readiness

Delaware addressed the following Focused Investment Areas in its application:

*Early Learning
and
Development
Standards*

(C)(1): Developing and using statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards. All early learning programs utilize the

Applicant

Office of the Governor,
State of Delaware

Lead Agency

Delaware Department of
Education

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Total Federal Award

\$49,478,774

Grant Period

January 1, 2012 –
December 31, 2015

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) discretionary grant program supports states in building statewide systems that raise the quality of early learning and development programs and increase access to high-quality programs for children with high needs, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Information in this abstract is drawn from the state's RTT-ELC grant application.

Early Learning Foundations as the universal statewide definition of learning standards. The development process, guiding principles, and final Early Learning Foundations incorporated the needs of children with disabilities, dual language learners, and other special populations.

*Health
Promotion*

(C)(3): Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness. Delaware has an existing statewide framework, Help Me Grow, which has been designed with an emphasis on helping families navigate the different agencies and partners, and on coordinating systems for referral and follow-up to ensure complete coverage. The grant will expand capacity in several critical service areas, including comprehensive screening, mental health consultation, and nutritional supports.

*Establish
Workforce
Knowledge and
Competency
Framework*

(D)(1): Developing a workforce knowledge and competency framework and a progression of credentials. Delaware's strategy for educator compensation focuses directly on programs that are serving high concentrations of children with high needs, and includes both recruitment bonuses and ongoing wage enhancements that provide incentives for improvement and retention along the state's career lattice. Delaware is broadening the set of credentials available to early childhood educators to include diverse opportunities for more specialized expertise.

*Support
Workforce
Improvement*

(D)(2): Supporting early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Programs serving children with high needs will benefit from a more intense level of on-site leadership coaching, as well as resources to fund release time to enable professional development outside of classroom hours.

*Kindergarten
Entry
Assessment*

(E)(1): Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. As Delaware prepares to implement a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment, the process of piloting and evaluation will include engagement of stakeholders and experts regarding developmental, linguistic, and cultural appropriateness. Delaware will also support the creation of "readiness teams" that include stakeholders from early learning and elementary systems in communities of greatest need.

Delaware has 28,022 children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families. The state reports that it is leveraging \$31,405,039 in other funding sources to support this effort.